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Gender and Sexuality Center History

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G&S Center Name Change

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Why Make the Change from LGBTQ Center to Gender and Sexuality Center?

Ultimately, there are four central reasons that we chose to rename our center:

- National trends in centers like ours are moving towards names that reflect a breadth of exploration and involvement. Many centers are finding that variations on “LGBTQ” are far too limiting in their representation of the work we do.
- Our center’s mission deals with emphasizing the development of multiple and intersecting identities surrounding gender and sexuality. As such, while we do specialize and prioritize many LGBTQ+ themes and programs, our purpose is actually broader than that, as well. We hope to create space for all people to explore facets of their identities and “Gender and Sexuality Center” is more closely tied to that purpose.
- Nationwide, students, faculty, and staff at colleges and universities are identifying in increasingly varying capacities in terms of the gender and sexuality. There are well over 100 distinct identities that could be deemed to be encompassed in the “LGBTQ” community. As such, a label like “LGBTQ” is simply far too limiting in its scope to be truly reflective of people’s experiences. Gender and Sexuality Center, however, allows for all people, regardless of identity, to feel welcome, included, and present in our spaces and services.
- The label “LGBTQ” encompasses identity almost exclusively in its language, whereas Gender and Sexuality can be seen as expanding upon multiple facets of identity, social structures, culture, media, theory, etc.

How Did We Come to This Decision?

With the anticipated opening of our new center, the center staff decided that it was important to engage in a thoughtful discussion about how we label ourselves and what message(s) that sends. As such, in the summer of 2013, we began a discussion with multiple campus entities regarding the name of the center. Through the span of a year, we had conversations with students, faculty, and staff around the campus in intentional capacities to explore our center’s name. Following these discussions, our staff spent a great deal of time analyzing everyone’s feedback in order to come to consensus on our new name. Finally, the new name was vetted back through those channels for feedback and approval. We strongly believe that the Gender and Sexuality Center will be the appropriate label to lead us into the future at URI and we invite you to join us in that journey.